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RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN 0378  
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 1631  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3232

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001508

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2016  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CMGT](#) [CVIS](#) [EZ](#) [KVPR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: GWOT INFORMATION EXCHANGE: SEEN AS LINKED TO THE  
VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

REF: A. STATE 190832

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 01457

Classified By: DCM Cameron Munter for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

#### SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) The Czechs have a modern immigration database available at all ports-of-entry, a comprehensive watchlist is in use, and they began issuing biometric passports in early September 2006. Biometric systems will be introduced at ports-of-entry once the Czech Republic joins the Schengen zone. The Czechs would be appropriate partners for information sharing. The Czechs are interested in increased cooperation on visa and immigration issues, and view this cooperation as an important step on the road to participation in the Visa Waiver Program. Separately, the Czech embassy is seeking to send interior ministry experts to meet with DHS on security enhancements to the Visa Waiver Program. End Summary.

#### IMMIGRATION, WATCHLIST, BIOMETRIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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[1](#)2. (U) Consular section chief met with Tomas Heisman, Director of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior on December 12 to solicit information requested in paragraph four of ref (A). Heisman is the Interior Ministry representative on the Bilateral Consular Working Group.

[1](#)3. (C) Heisman was able to answer most of the questions, and the following information is keyed to the questions specified in paragraph four:

[1](#)A. Immigration Databases: The Czechs rely on two computerized immigration databases. One is called the Foreigner Information System. It was developed as a prerequisite for integration with the Schengen system (called SIS), and involves all persons of foreign origin. It took two years to develop and is used by the Border and Aliens Police. They also have a system called the Modern Visa Processing system, which is an electronically managed visa processing system. The Foreigner Information System is available at all ports-of-entry and via mobile databases available to the border police. Heisman considers it reliable and said it was upgraded daily. He could not specify any problems with the system. He said that there is no specific exit/entry database because of Czech EU membership. He noted that discussions about this have begun on the EU level.

¶B. Watchlist and Information Sharing: Heisman said that the principle watchlist is called ENO (List of Unwanted Persons). The primary source of information is domestic, and includes persons who have committed crimes, immigration violations, or who are deemed security risks. The secondary source of information is the EU. There is also a list of high-risk countries, whose citizens receive special scrutiny.

¶C. Biometrics: The Czechs began issuing a biometric passport in early September. It contains a chip with biographic information and photo. They plan to add fingerprint information sometime in 2008. Currently, there are no biometric systems in place at ports-of-entry. Their intention is to introduce such systems once they are included in the Schengen area. At that time, biometric systems would be available at all airports, as well as the seven regional Aliens and Border Police headquarters.

¶D. Identifying Appropriate Partners: Post assessment is that host government would be an appropriate partner for data sharing. Post maintains good working relations with the host country intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and does not believe the Czechs would make inappropriate use of shared information.

#### ADDITIONAL COOPERATION SOUGHT BY BOTH SIDES

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¶4. (SBU) Conoff also asked whether the Czechs currently share, or would be willing to share, information on lost and stolen passports, both blank and issued. Heisman was unable to answer this question but promised to set up a meeting with the appropriate person.

¶5. (SBU) At the close of the meeting Heisman commented that information sharing was "an important and necessary step" on

visa cooperation, and said he understood the need for requests for specific information. He promised to respond positively to future requests for information, and to steer us to the appropriate source when the information was not within his competence. In addition, he suggested some other possible areas of cooperation: He suggested we provide training to Czech immigration officers on the new U.S. biometric passport. He requested information on how we train consular officers. He also suggested that it might be useful for the Embassy to invite Interior Minister Langer to visit the consular section and see how we process visas. Finally, he indicated a willingness to permit the U.S. side, whether it be DHS, the Embassy, or both, to tour any port-of-entry to see border inspection operations and namechecking firsthand.

#### EXPERTS MEETING WITH DHS SOUGHT

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¶6. (SBU) Separately, Ivo Svoboda from the Foreign Ministry Consular Department called to say he had been requested by the Czech Embassy in Washington to try to arrange a visit by Czech interior ministry experts to the Department of Homeland Security. The purpose would be to discuss the security enhancements suggested in recent DHS statements about proposed changes to the Visa Waiver Program. He also said it was the Czech Embassy suggestion that such cooperation of experts would make the Bilateral Consular Working Group obsolete. We told Svoboda that we believed the BCWG was still the appropriate forum to cooperate on these issues (see Ref B for a report of the November 22 BCWG at the ambassador/foreign minister level), and that a visit to DHS would be premature at this time, and probably until new legislation was passed. He expressed his agreement, and was somewhat puzzled by his Embassy's request.

#### COMMENT

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¶7. (SBU) Heisman - and probably all our contacts who have anything to do with border security - views all requests for information through the prism of President Bush's Tallinn

statement on the visa waiver program, the subsequent briefings by DHS, and the introduction of legislation by Senator Voinovich at the end of this year's Congress. This means that they view cooperation on border security as an important step for the Czechs on the path to participation in the visa waiver program. It is therefore a particularly propitious time to press them for information. This positive atmosphere should continue at least as long as hopes for a legislative change to the visa waiver program remain alive. Even if legislative hopes fizzle we expect cooperation to continue, but perhaps without the current enthusiasm.

GRABER